

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Matters Committee

Wednesday 16 June 2021, 7pm
Zoom and Frome Town Hall

Present:
Councillors:

In the Chamber: Rich Ackroyd, Maxine Crawley, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove (Chair),

On Zoom: Ali Barclay, Rob Collett, Anita Collier, Anne Hills, Paul Horton, Andy Palmer, Scott Ward

In attendance:

Dave West (SS&L), Julie Reader Sullivan (Head of Growth and Planning, MDC), Cllr Sheila Gore, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter, Sarah, Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Development Manager), Jane, Beccy Byrne (Marketing and Communications Officer), Melody Hunter Evans (Children and Young People's Project Officer), Nikki Cox (Children and Young People's Project Officer), Viv Whitaker (Project Officer), George Tomlinson (Marketing and Tourism Officer), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

3 members of the public in the Chamber

2 members of the public on Zoom

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2021/15/TM	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>Nick Dove proposed to give the Town Clerk delegated authority to implement the decisions of the Town Matters Committee, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously by those Cllrs in the Council Chamber.</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Lizzie Boyle and Steve Tanner</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests Rich Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Anita Collier and Scott Ward declared personal interests in item 7.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 21 April 2021 The minutes of the Town Matters Committee meeting held on 21 April 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	

	Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.	
2021/16/TM	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs</p> <p>Gill Fone noted maintenance was required of the Foundry Barton open space and an ash tree needed attention. Paul Wynne told Gill that he would speak with Chris Stringer about the additional works.</p> <p>Gill also enquired as to whether the Post Office in the current Co – Op in the Westway would be taken over by Royal Mail. Peter Wheelhouse explained FTC were working with landlord to find a solution that retained the Post Office in the Westway .</p> <p>Sue Hughes thanked FTC for the additional seats along Rodden Meadow.</p>	PWY
2021/17/TM	<p>3. Presentation from MDC's Head of Service for Planning and Growth, Julie Reader-Sullivan, on Mendip's work on supporting economic development</p> <p>Julie Reader Sullivan gave a comprehensive review of the Mendip's most recent work including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The successful delivery of grants to businesses. Although she did accept there had been some challenges and some lessons to be learned. Cllrs all agreed that Julie and her team did a fantastic job with the amount of work and such as a small team. • Plans for a Coronavirus business impact survey which was to understand support needed. • Plans for a Somerset wide economic strategy. • Finding the new normal with the decline of the retail function of the high street. There were new opportunities as other non-retail sectors to grow and questions around the traditional office working space and understanding the impact on younger workers. • Mendip business hub. My Mendip, a community-based platform • A tourism strategy – the objectives had been agreed, they were working on developing a grant and a service level agreement with Visit Somerset • Creative Mendip, an opportunity to provide support to the creative sector and they were developing a grant • Logistics Hub. Skills update including apprenticeships and the Kickstart scheme • Growth Hub • Producing guide on support and funding • Reviewing the economic development strategy 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding. Levelling up fund, community renewal fund, reopening the high street welcome back fund (102k for district) <p>Maxine Crawley thanked Julie and her team for everything they had been doing. She asked if there was anything being set aside for businesses around mental health? Julie explained there wasn't directly from MDC. However, there would be something as part of the community renewal fund.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd noted there had been quite a few complaints about the planning department, and asked if they were any closer to getting more staff? Julie explained they had taken agency cover and had very recently employed a senior planner and a principal planner. Applications were now being validated within four days.</p> <p>Paul Horton and Rob Collett asked if the economic strategy was linked with their work on climate change and encouraging sustainability. Julie noted they were promoting walking and cycling as part of the tourism strategy especially the Walkers are Welcome scheme. Julie also explained the economic strategy review would have a sustainable focus. Before lockdown, businesses were doing things in a better way but then had to switch to survival mode. Also, the Tourism strategy had a climate impact assessment.</p> <p>Nick Dove thanked Julie for her time</p>	
2021/18/TM	<p>4. For information – an update on the work to support local businesses</p> <p>Viv Whitaker gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>George Tomlinson gave an overview her role to support businesses which was about keeping the Discover Frome website up to date and keeping comms channels open. She noted that the Discover Frome Facebook and Instagram feeds had recently been relaunched to promote Frome as a place to visit, and there had been an increase in followers. George was currently working on linking the Discover Frome listings with FIND in the “things to do” section for families.</p> <p>Viv explained their next steps were to restart the good business visits and connect with a wider range of businesses across town.</p> <p>Anita Collier asked if a change of time was being considered for Discuss and Do? Viv noted that the working lunches worked</p>	

	<p>really well, they were looking at an 11am start with training and networking. They were considering evenings as well.</p> <p>Andy Palmer said the Chamber were keen to see something like a Frome kitemark. Viv said it could be explored further.</p> <p>Rob Collett asked about the postponed business event at the C&G? Viv said it was still on hold but would have conversations with the Chamber.</p>	VW
2021/19/TM	<p>5. For information – an update on the work of the Vocational Training Group Maxine Crawley introduced the report.</p> <p>Viv Whitaker explained that the group met every 6 weeks. At one of their meetings, they invited young people to speak about the impact of lockdown, this provided useful feedback, highlighting both negative and positive experiences. Spring Forward, collaborative working with training providers, now had a section of the FTC website where training opportunities were highlighted as well as signposting to further information and support. Spring Forward would be launched at the Frome Carnival fun day on 25 September. Finally, FTC had successfully taken part in the Kickstart scheme by employing a trainee Ranger. Edventure had helped to facilitate 60 placements in Frome.</p> <p>Dave West from Somerset Skills & Learning explained they were a community interest company that offered community learning, qualifications, and apprenticeships. Dave noted lockdown had seen a huge shift in demand, particularly for online courses. 90% of the courses SS&L offered were fully funded. He explained remote learning had presented an opportunity. They were experiencing a demand for basic skills like Maths and English with 93% opting to learn online. From August, SS&L would be able to offer fully funded Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A Level). Dave noted that Counselling and Mental Health training were now the most popular courses. They were in the process of opening a new centre in Shepton Mallet. They were also hoping to buy a childcare nursery in the area within this year. In Frome, they had already purchased Cloud 9 beauty salon where they were able to offer adult training.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked how secure was SS&L's funding going forward? Dave explained community learning funding had been secured for two years. He was waiting for news about adult qualification funding. He felt they were in a strong funding</p>	

	position as the proven demand for training increased the chances of successful grant funding.	
2021/20/TM	<p>6. For information - Children and Young People's Project Work</p> <p>Kate Hellard gave a comprehensive summary of the report. She noted the report was written against the objectives of the work programme. Broadly, these were to identify and fill gaps in the broad range of services for children and families.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked why the word family was used in the acronym for FIND rather than Frome? Kate explained that the hope was that the model could be shared with other areas in the future.</p> <p>Ali Barclay asked if there were plans to keep FIND up to date? Kate explained that the website would be updated regularly. The future ambition was to have a more sophisticated platform so the organisations could update the information themselves.</p> <p>Rob Collett noted how the meeting had highlighted how much FTC was facilitating. He asked how could this amount of work be demonstrated to some of the skeptical of the public? Rachel explained that was everything the comms team tried to do. She said we could never do enough. However, generally the town understood the work of the Town Council.</p> <p>Maxine Crawley asked Kate how her team included young people with additional needs? Kate explained that they all worked closely with the schools. They always looked at how those that didn't get what they might out of the education system could be supported. Kate noted all schools were inclusive. She and the team would be mostly working with SCC in the coming months to make sure statutory requirements and funding is deployed in the right places.</p>	
2021/21/TM	<p>7. For ratification – Community grants</p> <p>Kate Hellard summarised the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ratify the awards for community grants in table 1. 2. Delegate authority to the Community Development Manager to ensure the recommended conditions are met and review the impacts of this funding as appropriate. 3. Ratify the Mayor's Grant awards detailed above <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	

2021/22/TM	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 4 August 2021, Frome Town Hall and Zoom.	
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Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.47pm